

LICHFIELD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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A N N U A L R E P O R T

of

The MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH for YEAR 1945

by

RONALD E. JOHNSON, M.B., Ch.B.

Rural Council House,
LICHFIELD.

18th September, 1946.

To the Chairman and Members
of the Lichfield Rural
District Council.

The past year has not quite maintained the exceptionally good figures for the state of the public health in the district in comparison for those of 1944. At the same time I feel that taken statistically alone these show a very fine result if one bears in mind that this was the sixth year of wartime conditions, rationing, etc. At the same time I do not wish it to appear that I look on matters complacently and that is why I have stressed that these results are purely statistical. For example the Death Rate has remained very low but this does not take into account the fact that it would have been far higher but for the great improvements in treatment with the full use of the Sulphanilamide drugs and Penicillin, for many cases have been saved which in earlier years would have been hopeless. Also I do feel that there is a general tendency to a feeling of tiredness and irritability, due to a general slight lowering of the standard of health. This slight lowering would prove a great danger signal in the event of the outbreak of any universal epidemic such as Influenza.

The Birth Rate has been 19.04 per thousand of the population - a decrease of .1 compared with the previous year but 3.06 above that for the country in general. The Death Rate has been 10.00 per thousand which is again .1 less than the previous year and compares with a figure of 11.4 for the whole country. The deaths from all maternal causes are the same as the previous year namely 2.

The infant Mortality Rate, that is deaths in infants under one year of age shows a disturbing rise namely from 36.1 for the previous year to 48. This figure is the proportion per thousand live births and compares with a figure of 46 for the whole country.

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Taking these figures as a whole the slight decrease in the birth rate is easily explained by the fact that a large proportion of the male population of productive age were overseas and I think that these will show a great increase in the ensuing year. The death rate can be looked upon as satisfactory but I can give no exact reason for the increase in the infant mortality rate and I think that before any opinion is given as to the cause of this it would be wiser to wait and see if the year 1946 shows any better figures.

The notification of infectious diseases does not show any particular items of outstanding importance. The great increase in Measles was due to a country wide epidemic. The increase in Scarlet Fever was almost entirely due to a big local epidemic in the Rugeley area in the second half of the year and as our district almost entirely surrounds this we naturally should expect an increase in its incidence in those parishes which verged upon this town and this is what occurred. The incidence of Diphtheria remains very low and I do feel that we are now beginning to notice the benefits of the Immunisation campaign. This has proceeded and I can now report that since it commenced a total of 5,063 children have been immunised in our area. I think that in the region of 60% of children have now been immunised but do not feel that one can look on this as satisfactory until at least 75% have been so protected.

A bright feature is that the notifications of Tuberculosis have dropped from 30 to 19 for this year whilst the deaths from this disease have also gone down from 16 to 11.

In the following tabulated figures the corresponding figure for the previous year is shown in brackets after the figure for 1945.

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------|
| ESTIMATED POPULATION. | 32,710 | (32,760) |
| BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 OF ESTIMATED POPULATION. | 19.04 | (19.14) |
| DEATH RATE PER 1,000 OF ESTIMATED POPULATION. | 10.00 | (10.13) |
| DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES:- | | |
| Puerperal & Post-Abortion Sepsis | - | (-) |
| Other Puerperal Causes | 2 | (2) |
| MATERNAL DEATHS PER 1,000 BIRTHS. | 3.19 | (3.19) |
| DEATH RATE OF INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR OF AGE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS. | 48 | (36.1) |
| DEATHS FROM CANCER (all ages) | 40 | (48) |
| DEATHS FROM MEASLES (all ages) | 3 | (-) |
| DEATHS FROM WHOOPING COUGH (all ages) | 2 | (1) |
| DEATHS FROM DIPHTHERIA (under 2 years of age) | 1 | (-) |

AVERAGE RATES FOR ENGLAND AND WALES FOR 1945 (1944 in brackets).

| | | |
|------------------------|------|--------|
| BIRTH RATE. | 16.1 | (17.6) |
| DEATH RATE. | 11.4 | (11.6) |
| INFANT MORTALITY RATE. | 46 | |

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CAUSES OF DEATHS IN THE RURAL DISTRICT OF LICHFIELD IN 1945.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| All causes. | 327 | (331) |
| 1. Typhoid & Paratyphoid Fevers. | - | (-) |
| 2. Measles. | 3 | (-) |
| 3. Scarlet Fever. | - | (-) |
| 4. Whooping Cough. | 2 | (1) |
| 5. Diphtheria. | - | (1) |
| 6. Influenza. | - | (-) |
| 7. Encephalitis Lethargica. | - | (-) |
| 8. Cerebrospinal Fever. | - | (-) |
| 9. Tuberculosis of Respiratory System. | 7 | (14) |
| 10. Other Tuberculous Diseases. | 4 | (2) |
| 11. Syphilis. | 1 | (2) |
| 12. General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis. | - | (-) |
| 13. Cancer. | 40 | (48) |
| 14. Diabetes. | 4 | (3) |
| 15. Cerebral Haemorrhage. | 33 | (46) |
| 16. Heart Disease. | 98 | (67) |
| 17. Aneurysm. | - | (-) |
| 18. Other Circulatory Diseases. | 10 | (5) |
| 19. Bronchitis. | 17 | (16) |
| 20. Pneumonia (all forms). | 13 | (11) |
| 21. Other Respiratory Diseases. | 3 | (7) |
| 22. Peptic Ulcer. | 7 | (1) |
| 23. Diarrhoea (under 2 years). | 1 | (-) |
| 24. Appendicitis. | 1 | (-) |
| 25. Cirrhosis of the Liver. | - | (-) |
| 26. Other Diseases of the Liver. | - | (-) |
| 27. Other Diseases of the Digestive System. | 7 | (6) |
| 28. Acute & Chronic Nephritis. .. | 4 | (8) |
| 29. Puerperal & Post-Abortion Sepsis. | - | (-) |
| 30. Other Puerperal Causes. | 2 | (2) |
| 31. Congenital Malformations, Birth Injuries, Premature Birth, etc. | 24 | (21) |
| 32. Senility. | - | (-) |
| 33. Suicide. | 2 | (2) |
| 34. Other Violent Causes. | 14 | (17) |
| 35. Other Defined Causes. | 30 | (49) |
| 36. Causes Ill-defined or unknown. | - | (-) |

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES (CIVILIANS ONLY) RECEIVED DURING THE YEAR 1945 (1944 in brackets).

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Typhoid Fever. | 1 | (-) |
| Paratyphoid Fever. | - | (-) |
| Scarlet Fever. | 45 | (25) |
| Whooping Cough. | 39 | (12) |
| Diphtheria. | 9 | (9) |
| Erysipelas. | 1 | (2) |
| Small Pox. | - | (-) |
| Measles. | 390 | (16) |
| Pneumonia. | 19 | (19) |
| Puerperal Pyrexia. | 2 | (3) |
| Acute Poliomyelitis. | 1 | (1) |
| Cerebrospinal Fever. | - | (1) |
| Dysentery. | 7 | (22) |

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WATER SUPPLY.

The Ministry of Health in their instructions as to what matters are to be included in this report require various details as to the water supply of the area.

The South Staffordshire Waterworks Company are the statutory water undertakers for practically the whole of the Council's area and this Company through its technical staff exercise continual control over the quality of the water supplied, resulting in a high standard of purity being regularly maintained.

The chief difficulty experienced by the Council in relation to its water supply during the year under review was, of course, the supply to the village of Hints. Here some 45 houses and farms are supplied by means of two hydraulic rams which lift spring water into a reservoir from which it gravitates by a series of pipes to the properties concerned. Early in the year the rams were put out of action by flood and frost and though every attempt was made within the power of the Council to secure the system being brought back to proper working order, it was found impossible to do this as it was increasingly obvious that, due principally to age, the rams were so reduced in efficiency and reliability that they could no longer maintain a regularly sufficient supply. This condition of affairs continued throughout the year and well into 1946, but, despite the fact that to do so trespasses on to next year's report, I feel that I must record the fact that the supply is now satisfactorily assured by a temporary expedient designed to continue until a permanent satisfactory system is introduced. Full details of this improvement will be included in my next Annual Report.

Of the 8,600 houses in the area it is estimated that 8,000 are furnished with a piped supply of water from public or private mains. No figures are available as to the number of houses supplied by means of standpipes, but the total is certainly comparatively quite a small one.

INFESTATION.

Mention is also called for in this report on the steps taken to combat infestation during the year. Little trouble has been experienced in regard to infestations of fleas, bugs, crickets and similar domestic insects. Such infestations as came within the notice of the department were dealt with either by the issue of insecticide, with instructions as to its use, to the occupiers concerned or by the direct application of this by departmental officers. Treatment by either method proved reasonably satisfactory.

The Council is now the authority for administration of the Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919, having accepted delegation of this duty from the County Council. The work in general has, I feel, been carried out satisfactorily, this being largely due to the

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excellent co-operation received from the County War Agricultural Executive Committee.

Some amount of trouble was experienced with infestation of crickets on house refuse tips. One tip in particular was found to be seriously infested but diligent application of a suitable insecticide resulted in a complete disinfestation being secured.

RONALD E. JOHNSON.
Medical Officer of Health.

